POCAHONTAS COUNTY HISTORY

A standard size, full-length history of Pocahontas County, W. Va. Designed for use as a textbook in the county's schools.

Sponsor: Pocahontas County Court and Board of Education

Proposed - March 29, 1940

Packed - March 23, 1942

Wordage compiled----------253,580

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First Folder - 11 reports research

Chapter 3 - Natural Setting - 47 reports research

Chapter 4 - The People -123 reports research

Chapter 5 - Early Life & Occupations 33 reports research

Chapter 6 - Religion------77 reports research

Chapter 7 - Commerce & Industry ----69 reports research

Chapter 8 - Transportation & Communication 27 reports research

Chapter 9 - Education ----------30 reports research

Chapter 10 - County Government -------23 reports research

Chapter 11 - Cultural & Social Advances ------11 reports research

Chapter 12 - List of Points of Interest------ 9 reports research

Chapter 14 - Calendar of Annual Events - newspaper clippings

War Veterans - 2 reports research

WEST VIRGINIA
May 7, 1941

METHOD OF DEVELOPING
COUNTY HISTORY MATERIAL

This method of development is designed to strike a happy medium between the chronological development of history text and the American Guide style which made necessary many cross-references. Under the general topic headings the material would be treated cumulatively as the story approached the present. Human interest material would be used wherever possible, and every opportunity for the use of names of people alive or dead would be utilized. The chapter headings below are subject to revision.

1. Preface and the usual acknowledgments.
2. Contemporary scene. This history would open with colorful but accurate description of the county at present; this would be the place for statistics as to its size, population, altitude, productivity, rank and importance in relation to others in the state or in its area. Here also would be short contemporary descriptions of towns and villages of any size or importance. This chapter would be short, and designed to establish the locals for the reader but would afford a throwback to the county's beginning.
3. Natural setting. This would be a concise treatment of geography, topography, climate, rivers, mountains, plant and animal life, in non-technical language for the average reader. The county's scenic sights would be here mentioned if there are any outstanding views or natural phenomena.
4. The people. This subject would be handled genetically: first, a record of the vestiges of the aborigines, such as Mound Builders; then the Indians, as to the tribes and general history within the confines of the county; then a record of the successive migrations of white men; giving their racial antecedents, occupations, why they

came, outstanding figures among them, their contributions to the standards of county life then and now. Any special ethnic groupings would be handled independently.

5. Early Life and Occupations. Sketch the frontiersman's occupations, hunting, trapping and fishing; then agriculture which first anchored him to one spot; then lumbering, early mining and quarrying, and the beginnings of the gas and oil developments. Handicrafts and any unusual or extraordinary occupations would be brought in here.

6. Religion. Next treated because the first permanent settlers immediately built some sort of a church and worshipped according to the belief that they had brought with them into the wilderness. In this chapter would be told the stories of the oldest churches, the leading sects, then and now, statistics on church membership, clerical figures of note, outstanding churches, brief sketches of church history from circuit rider to town cleric.

7. Commerce and Industry. Taking up from occupations; the growth of large industries, introduction of corporate industry and the mass-production extractives. Emphasize the county's productive status today and the fields in which it ranks high. Natural resources would be treated here, as a basis of tomorrow's industry.

8. Transportation and Communication. From the buffalo and Indian trails to the rivers and coach roads, highways, steam and electric railroads, including the communication services and their history. Conclude with the bus, train and other services available today.

9. Education. After industry and transportation came the stabilization which brought urban groupings and education. With the story of the school system in the county would be a short history of each college or academy in the county, if any.

10. County Government. All about the county's formation; its political sentiments in times of great national or state happenings; its outstanding public servants or reformers; roads and schools operated by the county.

11. Cultural and Social Advances. The history and functions of institutions, public and private; all public welfare, public health and recreational activities. Also the history of the arts and a sketch of any widely known artists or writers who were natives of or lived in the county.

12. Recapitulation. The story of the county's people as their thoughts and deeds were influenced by outstanding events or epochal changes in the history of the nation and the state. What did they think and do during the Revolutionary War? How did they stand on slavery? On separation from Virginia? On the free silver issue? On prohibition, etc.?

13. A List of Points of Historic Interest, with a short description of each and directions for reaching them.

14. A Calendar of Annual Events in tabulated form.

15. Directory of Permanent Organization in the county, and perhaps of public offices. Also other official data such as election days, voting provisions, etc. Perhaps a summary of peculiar or unusual town ordinances.

16. Biographical Sketches of prominent men or prominent families, arranged alphabetically.

WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

April 22, 1940

Mr. Joseph N. Alderson
State Work Projects Administrator
Deardorff-Sisler Building
Huntington, West Virginia

Attention: Mrs. Florence H. Wilkinson, Director
Women's and Professional Projects

Dear Mr. Alderson:

We are returning to you herewith 3 signed and approved copies of DPS-19 on the:

History of Pocahontas County

Two copies are held here for the Washington office files.

Under Section 5 we have added the phrase "and a copy to the Director of Finance, Washington, D. C." which your mimeographed form does not carry, and which our procedures ask for. Please insert this on all future forms.

Under Section 12 we have added our usual parenthetic phrase (35 copies are to be sent to the Washington office). We have also corrected the number of free copies from 10 to 50, in accordance with G-5. These changes have been initialed by us; we hope they will also meet with your approval.

Sincerely yours,

C. E. Triggs, Director
Community Service Projects

By
J. D. Newsom, Director
WPA Writers' Program

Enclosures 3

1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

April 9, 1940

Mr. Joseph N. Alderson
State Work Projects Administrator
Deardorff-Sisler Building
Huntington, West Virginia

Attention: Mrs. Florence H. Wilkinson, Director
Women's and Professional Projects

Dear Mr. Alderson:

We are returning to you herewith four approved copies of each set of DPS-18, covering:

Pocahontas County History Project
Wyoming County History Project

Two copies of each set are held here in the Washington Office files.

Sincerely yours,

C. E. Triggs, Director
Community Service Projects

By
J. D. Newsom, Director
WPA Writers' Program

Enclosures 8

FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY
WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION
1734 NEW YORK AVENUE NW.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

F. C. HARRINGTON
COMMISSIONER OF WORK PROJECTS

Feb. 1

April 22, 1940

Mr. Joseph N. Alderson
State Work Projects Administrator
Deardorff-Sisler Building
Huntington, West Virginia

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Enclosures 3

Juanita S. Dilley
Clover Lick, W. Va.
Jan. 12, 1940

Pocahontas County: Chapter 4 and 5

Part (a) Latter Part of question 2

Part (3-b) Handicrafts Developed through Necessity.

OCCUPATIONS BETWEEN 1810 - 1860.

The principal industry was of course farming, but because of a growing need for them, other small industries such as blacksmithing and milling were established in all sections of the county..

The first stores were at Huntersville, but after the building of the Staunton, Parkersburg Road through the upper part of the county, and the Marlinton to Lewisburg road in the lower part of the county in 1854-56 stores opened at Greenbank, Millpoint, and soon at other points.

Since there was so much blacksmith work to be done shops sprung up all over the county.

Henry Harper who lived on Knapps Creek, having moved there soon after 1812 to a 200 acre farm owned by his father Nicholas Harper, did much to promote industry in that section. He built the first tilt hammer in this region. This shop was carried on under his personal supervision. Ralph Wanless, George Hevener of Pandleton, and Anthony Lightner of Swago, and many others learned the trade with him, and were all good smiths. Other improvements made by him were: a tannery shop built by William Civey, and a saw mill built by Robert and John Irvin. At his suggestion William Civey sunk a tan yard at his home on Anthonys Creek.

Henry harper was one of the contractors for the Huntersville, Warm Springs Turnpike in 1838. But aside from all these things he went ahead with clearing land and developing his farm.

The Wanlesse's - James, Stephen, Ralph and John were famous smiths in the upper part of the county. Aside from shoeing horses and repairing wagons they also made axes, hoes, shovels, plows bulltongues, brush hooks, sere hoes, mattocks, broad axes, frows, grubbing hoes, pot hooks, kettle bales, log chains, double and single trees, door hinges and latches.

William Cochran of Stony Creek built the first tilt hammer on Swago.

Joseph Barlow of Red Lick Mountain had a blacksmith shop, a tannery, made and repaired shoes, did carpenter and cabinet work.

Thomas Drinnon of near Marlins Bottom made shoes.

John Burgess was a carpenter and for many years made most of the coffins needed in lower Pocahontas.

William Bradshaw of Brown Creek operated a carding machine. The bales of rolls were fastened with black thorns which grew so plentiful in this section. John Galford, Jr. conducted a flourishing tannery at Huntersville.

Rev. John Waugh of Indian Draft was a skillful worker in metals. His speciality being hoes one of the most useful implements. He also excelled in tempering axes another implement of invaluable help to the pioneer.

John Logan of Top Alleghany was a skilled cabinet maker.

William Curry was a stone mason. After his marriage he went to Lewis County.

George W. Whiting and his son Ebenezer Whiting of Droop Mountain were skilled masons, plasterers, and brick layers. It is reported that the mortar they used would adhere so tenaciously that sometimes it had to be chipped from a brick. The smooth finish they gave plastering has not been excelled in our time with all our modern improvements.

William Mayse was one of the first blacksmiths at Millpoint, working in a shop built by Valentine Cackley.

Daniels Kerr who located here soon after the Revolutionary War on the upper end of the vast estate now owned by Uriah Hevener, established a mill, a saw mill, and a blacksmith shop on Little Back Creek branch of Deer Creek. His place became a center of industry for a wide region.

Joshua Kee who lived one mile below Marlinton could work in iron, stone and wood. His specialty was gunsmithing, a great service to the people as so much hunting was done.

John Kee specialized in wagon making.

Nathan Burgess, a gunsmith. Many of the old hunters of the early part of the century were supplied by him with rifles. Some of his rifles were used for military service during the Civil War. One of the best specimen of his workmanship was made for the late William McNeill of Buckeye. It was reputed to be one of the most accurate in aim and far reaching of any mountain rifles ever in the country.

(Part of this material was taken from History of Pocahontas County - Price. and part of it from old papers.)